

A Call to Action: Economic renewal that serves people and place

The Camden Economic Renewal Commission
London Borough of Camden | UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose

July 2020



Institute for Innovation
and Public Purpose



Foreword

Letter from our co-chairs

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Six family members sharing a bedroom with no device to learn or work on, an autistic child shaking the windows to escape the noise of his family, a mum losing work and fighting depression as she struggles to support her children — this has been the reality of many lives in lockdown. Two young black brothers told us that the first time they left their house in weeks for a short walk they were stopped by the police. Covid-19 and the accompanying lockdown haven't treated us all equally.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown starkly the cost of accepting high levels of health and social inequality. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents and poorer communities are more likely to catch Covid-19 and more likely to lose their lives when they do. This didn't happen by chance. It is a result of long-term, structural social, economic and health inequalities. And the economic consequence looks no better — the jobs most at risk through the crisis are the most insecure and the lowest paid.

We are writing jointly as the Leader of Camden Council and the Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at UCL, which is based in Camden, because we believe that we have a once in a generation moment to turn today's pain and loss into a coalition for lasting change. The story of the crisis in Camden shows the real cost of an unequal society and economy but also the power of places and communities, and their ability to lead change and recovery. Now is the time for locally driven, purposeful economic growth and renewal.

Camden is a Borough in the heart of London that, within 22 square kilometres, contains all the complexities, contradictions and challenges of the UK and urban life in the 21st century. As Akala says in his book *Natives*, 'If there is anywhere in Britain that could serve as a petri dish for examining race, class and culture, Camden would be that place.' It is a borough home to the UK's leading innovation district, world leading universities and cultural institutions like the British Museum, British Library, UCL and Central Saint Martins. Companies like Google and Facebook and the square mile around Kings Cross alone contribute in excess of £43bn Gross Value Added (GVA) per year (larger than Manchester and Birmingham combined). This rich cultural landscape is both a critical part of Camden's (and Britain's) economy, and also our social fabric. Camden is also a place where next door to this enormous wealth, 40 percent of children grow up in poverty. We have some of the highest rates of homelessness in the country and, in the last year, five young people lost their lives to violence on our streets. Most importantly, however, it is home to citizens who speak over 130 languages and has a radical history of civic action and people powered movements.

Camden 2025, which was written by a citizen's assembly, sets out a community-led vision of a place where everyone has the chance to succeed, nobody gets left behind, and everybody has a voice. Camden Council has been on a journey to unleash the power of our communities and ensure all who live here have a stake in the wealth and opportunity on their doorstep. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality, and strengthened the community's resolve to tackle it, based on these Camden values. In the early days of the Covid-19 crisis, the Council made a pledge to its community: it

promised that no-one would go hungry, no-one would be evicted from their home, no care worker would lose money due to illness and all lives would be treated as valuable. These pledges reflect Camden Council's ultimate purpose – to address the racial, health, educational, housing, digital and work inequalities that challenge our place and our community and prevent everyone from being able to succeed.

To fulfil that promise, the Council mobilised a team of 2,000 volunteers and rolled out new services to combat hunger, support distressed businesses, address educational disparities and tackle other challenges triggered by Covid-19. Within seven weeks, it delivered more than 100,000 meals. It dispatched more than 80,000 pieces of PPE to frontline workers and care staff. It developed a £3 million hardship fund to support residents struggling with financial obligations. And it launched an enquiry into the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority-Ethnic residents.

It did not do these things alone. Although central government's response has focused on centralised planning and relied on local authorities to deliver their interventions, the reality is that the support people have received through this time has come from many places.

Camden's rich and vibrant community and voluntary sector have rallied in remarkable ways. Neighbours are supporting neighbours, and grass root activism has knitted these neighbours together in Mutual Aid groups. Tenant halls and community centres have set up food hubs, graffiti has been replaced with rainbows and streets lit up with the sound of applause and bagpipes celebrating our NHS. Camden Council has built on existing partnerships with voluntary organisations to go further and do more together than either could do

alone. In partnership with Age UK Camden, for example, redeployed Council staff have packaged food alongside volunteers and delivered parcels from repairs vans. The strength of these partnerships is testament to the Council's commitment not to retrench from these spaces in recent decades, despite ever-diminishing core funding.

Now, as we look towards a recovery from Covid-19, we sit at a crossroads locally and nationally.

As a country, we could pour money into trying to go back to how things were. But the economic model was failing people, characterized as it was by inequality and precarity, and damaging our planet. Camden's economy was dynamic and successful by any traditional measure but also struggled with in-work poverty and structural exclusion for too many – particularly for BAME communities, disabled residents and single parents. Centralisation and diminished local public services after years of austerity has left too many communities feeling powerless to change.

This is the moment to renew our democracy and economy.

We can harness the unique strengths of local governments and the places they serve to build a better future. We must use this opportunity to actively renew our economy and society, building new systems and structures that are inclusive and sustainable, and deliver on Camden's vision for a place in which everyone can succeed, and everyone has a voice. Camden's story in recent months makes clear that councils have the local knowledge to rapidly identify community challenges; the local relationships to organise people; and the speed and agility to test and implement solutions. When local places are resourced and empowered to take action, they are capable of responding to crises and enabling local places to thrive in ways that

central government cannot. This is true of the acute phase of the public health crisis as we fight the virus but also of the economic crisis which follows it.

In recognition of this moment, we are pleased to announce the creation of Camden's Economic Renewal Commission, a new taskforce that aims to promote a place-based recovery from Covid-19, generate public value and elevate the role of the public sector. Together, the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose and the London Borough of Camden will combine their knowledge of place, innovation and values-led economic growth to co-chair the Commission. The Commission will bring together community members, organisational experts, academic leaders and policy thinkers for active learning, vision setting and practical implementation.

We know that from Plymouth to Manchester there are communities who are doing the same and we invite all who want to help build this new future to join us. Our work is about Camden but also seeks to build a coalition of partners that understand that empowered places, given the tools they need, can drive a different model of growth.

Working at a grassroots level, we can turn this crisis into a coalition to remake an economy that invests in every person in every community. Please join us.

Georgia Gould and Mariana Mazzucato

Our vision

Renewing our economy



Renewing our economy

The story of this crisis shows the real cost of an unequal society and economy — but also the power of community and their ability to lead change. This is our time to embark on renewal. To grow a more inclusive and sustainable economy that works for all.

To unlock the power and creativity of our communities to renew, we need place-based leadership. The Renewal Commission is a new taskforce co-directed by Camden Council and UCL's Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP). It will bring together efforts to create economic renewal in Camden that is inclusive, fair, just, participatory, and sustainable. It will do so in recognition that economic renewal is fundamentally a matter of social justice — to achieve our ambitions for reduced racial, health, housing, education, digital and work inequality we must address how these inequalities are both manifested within and created by our economic system.

The focus of the Commission is borne from Camden's 2025 vision, a vision for the borough that residents, community organisations, businesses and public institutions co-created. It calls for Camden being a place where everyone can succeed, and where inequality is reduced. It calls for a strong, inclusive economy that enables everyone to access work that is right for them. And it calls for everyone in Camden to contribute to it being a place that is clean, vibrant and sustainable. Camden's Climate Assembly furthered this with specific calls about how Camden should pursue a sustainable future. A zero-carbon economy is central to this long-term future and requires radical change now.

We believe that an economic renewal that contributes to Camden's broader social justice mission must think radically about four significant challenges:

1. How we can grow an inclusive, resilient local economy in which all Camden residents can participate and thrive
2. How we can make a just transition to a zero-carbon economy and pursue clean growth by 2030
3. How we can ensure all Camden residents can access and develop within good quality work
4. How we can support people to build the capabilities they need to participate fairly in society and the economy

In responding to these challenges, we take a view that (explored further in 'our principles' below):

- **Place** creates opportunity — where people live can shape, or detract from, their opportunities. As such, local places can be powerful vehicles for change.
- **Value** is co-created between citizens, local government and business
- **Purpose** unites places and can solve societal challenges
- **Capability** requires investment — people can be agents of change in their lives and their community when they are invested in

Ultimately, the true test of an economy's success is not how large it is or how fast it grows, but how it supports people to live well. We need measures for our economy that go beyond GDP and local equivalents, and that capture a broader definition of prosperity defined by people themselves. This is not to say that growth is unimportant. Far from it. Growth can be a powerful engine for reducing inequality and improving our society. But to achieve this, the direction and purpose of the economy matters too.

The Renewal Commission will develop the practical policy recommendations to create this strong, inclusive, sustainable economy. It will set out clear outcomes and approaches to governing our collective effort at a local level, and have a close relationship with complementary work to co-design a local Wellbeing Index with Camden residents. It will have clear and strong links to related work including educational renewal, the borough's developing Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and work to analyse and address the disproportional impacts of Covid on BAME communities. The Commission will also be clear about the role of the Council, its partners, regional and national government in creating the type of change that we need, lobbying for change where this is necessary but doing so on the basis of clear evidence and strong policy positions.

The Renewal Commission will follow the principles of the successful 'Think and Do' citizen-led climate movement in Camden. Ideas will be co-created with citizens and other stakeholders and rooted in the lived experience of Camden's communities. The output won't just be a report but experiments on the ground, scaled projects and sharing stories from other places on a similar journey.

We want to connect with other places in the UK and around the world who speak the same language. In municipalities everywhere we aren't waiting for permission to develop new institutions and models to bring these ideas to life. You can see a new future unfolding in intergenerational living in Amsterdam, common spaces in Barcelona, community committees in Leeds or citizen's assemblies in Camden. The future will be built from the bottom up, powered by the imagination and energy of citizens. Connected, these civic experiments could create global movements that can beat the rising forces of extreme right-wing populism, inequality and the climate crisis.

Our principles

What we value and believe



Our principles

What we value and believe

Our work is driven by four key principles:

1

Place creates opportunity

2

Value is co-created between citizens, local government and business

3

Purpose unites places and can solve societal challenges

4

Capability requires investment

Place creates opportunity

Where people live can shape, or detract from, their opportunities, and as such we must understand the places people go and spend time as areas of economic opportunity, from our high streets to our estates.

Local places can also be powerful vehicles for change and drive inclusive economies. Local institutions and communities have enormous collective capacity to shape the future of the local economy. This includes the use of existing place-shaping powers, partnerships, and services to support people to acquire the skills and capabilities they need to access and progress in good work.

Anchor institutions like the NHS, the Council, and major private sector employers have collective spending power that can be harnessed to support growth – the way they employ people, procure, and use their assets can actively shape the direction of growth in Camden. Opportunities from the regeneration of Euston and the development of the Knowledge Quarter will create economic activity and, with the right partnerships and strategy, can ensure local communities benefit directly.

The foundational or ‘everyday economy’ of health, care, food, and retail need cultivation alongside high value tradeable services to ensure a balanced economy which provides work and services for all.

Central government must invest in local solutions and enable local places to act. To enable communities to thrive, and respond to future crises, central government must consistently invest in public services and the voluntary and community sector — instead of resorting to austerity when faced with a budget deficit. And it must do so in a way that allows local places to make decisions about how they can best grow, recognising that a thriving local place is composed of a coalition made up of community members, voluntary organisations, and public sector institutions. Given flexibility and proper resource, they are best placed to guide decisions about local renewal.

Value is co-created between citizens, local government and business

No one organisation can solve problems on its own. We need active government, responsible business and dynamic citizen groups to work together.

Camden's residents, businesses, community groups and voluntary organisations have demonstrated ingenuity, purpose and resilience in the face of Covid-19. They are experts by experience and understand how the inequalities of today impact on opportunity, wellbeing and safety. They have knowledge and energy to lead change.

And governments, national and local, are key to wealth creation, not just its distribution. For too long, government has been told it can step in to fill gaps left by the private sector, but not shape or steer the market. The challenge of Covid-19 has forced us to confront this orthodoxy with the public sector visibly stepping up in new ways. Camden is not a fixer on the sidelines of the economy, but a true 'market shaper' that can play a central role in value creation.

In particular, citizens and community groups must have a role in influencing the policies and practices that shape their lives. The public sector can support this by investing in close partnerships, drawing on citizen experience, and charting a shared way forward. The transitions required to our economic life as we recover from Covid-19 and deal with the threat of climate change and racial inequality can only be achieved through jointly designing solutions.

Camden's Climate Assembly

In 2019, Camden declared a climate crisis. The community was given the role of creating a climate action plan, through a Citizen Assembly. Residents came together representing a diverse cross section of Camden's community and views on climate, from those who thought Camden Council persecuted car users to others who felt that we should ban all cars. Together, they found a safe space to disagree, negotiate and chart a way forward.

Next came 'Think and Do', the opening of a boarded up high street to become a participation space to support social action on the climate crisis. The space was community-led but supported by the Council, so when a young person had the idea of creating a Camden forest, the Council's Parks and Open Spaces team got the trees and local groups distributed them. Opening up and letting go allowed amazing things to happen; the community felt empowered to lead. Throughout lockdown 'Think and Do' has risen to the challenges of the community and is currently being used as a hub for food distribution. This type of energy can be harnessed to renew our high streets, transforming them into centres of economic and civic activity which creates good work and healthy places.

Purpose unites places and can solve societal challenges

Progress is born out of a shared purpose between public value organisations, focused on clear and ambitious goals, or ‘missions’.

Today, it is increasingly recognised that the major challenges facing our societies in the 21st century – reducing inequality, the transition to a low carbon energy system, refashioning the welfare state to deal with an ageing population or creating affordable homes in the world’s fast-expanding major cities – cannot be reduced to ‘externalities’ that may or may not result from a functioning market system. And in the context of these challenges, we need to care as much about purposeful growth as the rate of growth. This means the dominant economic framework and its tools is not fit for purpose – we need to think boldly about what replaces it.

The response to Covid-19 crisis has shown the potential power of communities, institutions, businesses, and government coming together around a clear mission. When public, private, and civic actors are oriented around big, bold missions, they are more apt to share resources and work cooperatively to realise those missions. In the context of a local community, missions should speak to the values or aspirations of different residents and give residents a sense of ownership, including by engaging community members in the process of identifying missions themselves.

With clear place-based leadership, a combined focus on missions of agreed importance could deliver the transformative change we need.

Camden’s COVID-19 response

The value of place based relationships that Camden Council has spent years investing in and building was clear in responding to the Covid-19 crisis. Trust in these relationships has allowed experimentation. Just before lockdown began, Camden Council brought together a multi-disciplinary team of designers, children’s workers, housing staff and many more alongside FutureGov, a public sector focused design agency and Local Globe, a locally based investment firm. They worked at pace to build structures to amplify existing efforts with community groups (such as foodbanks and Age UK Camden’s emergency food parcels), they created new tools like a post code enabled directory of Covid-19 services, and built a platform called Beacon to give teams across the council a single picture of resident need in the crisis. This effort was worked because there was a clear mission, an enabling environment to support risk, diverse perspectives and upfront investment of time and money in building new services rather than just sticking plasters.

Capability requires investment

As Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen has advocated: we cannot take advantage of opportunities if we do not have capabilities. It is the responsibility of the welfare state to invest in and enable people to participate fairly in society and develop capacity for communities to have strong networks, emotional and financial resilience to manage change and transitions.

A reformed system should consider the myriad challenges that people face, whether that be career training, mental health, caring for relatives, physical disabilities, or childcare commitments. It should have the flexibility to deal with the complex and nuanced reasons for which people are out of work. And it should treat housing, food, transport, and digital access in the same way that it treats education and health — that is, as basic services critical to enabling social and economic participation. In doing so, it should help early, not wait until crisis hits. Getting the right support early can prevent a much more significant deterioration in someone's emotional and financial wellbeing, helping them to help themselves, and better serves both the individual and communities.

A welfare system that is responsive to individual circumstances needs to understand the people it serves. This is a challenge — because of Covid-19, the welfare state will have to support an unprecedented number of people. Local authorities can bring their knowledge of their communities to bear on the design of welfare policy, and given the ability to, be flexible to deliver it in the best way for the people of their place.

Most importantly, a reformed welfare system must look at people through their strengths and capabilities not just their vulnerabilities. Our current welfare state is based on a deficit model, powered by sanctions that dehumanises the

To Love is to Act

Camden has been on a journey of letting go of old structures and hierarchies, seeing people as 'whole people' and investing in residents' capacity to change their own lives. The Council has been navigating this in one of the hardest places state power is exercised: the choice to take children into care because of the risk they face at home.

Camden Council's social workers have chosen to share this power, asking parents who have been through this experience to provide constructive challenge and help the Council to do the best they can for children and families. This was a painful process of creating safe spaces to have hard conversations, learn and ultimately forgive and change. Now these parents use their lived experience to work with other parents in the same position, meeting with Council workers under the banner of 'to love is to act'. The Council is actively seeking to extend this relational approach to our economy, developing a human-centred, community driven approach to supporting people into work and navigating the welfare system. This focuses on creating capability and working with individual's strengths so that they can gain a foothold and progress in London's labour market.

majority because of the risk of a few 'cheating' the system. In Camden we have shown that public services powered by relationships, care and love allow people to flourish and grow. We have seen time and time again how an empowering, supportive relational approach can give residents the agency and resilience to live full, independent lives whether that's a family moving away from the need for social work intervention or an older person able to live at home supported by their community.

We must learn from the lessons of the past and continue to invest in capability beyond today's emergency. It is not good enough to put money in during an emergency, only to take it out later. Camden, for instance, has thus far received only £19 million from central government for crisis response, but anticipates a financial gap of £60 million caused by the pandemic. Many of our public services are delivered at the local level and we need to be investing in them systematically, making them strong and resilient. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of building strong organisations that can help mitigate crises in the bad times and foster innovation-led growth in good times.

Looking ahead

Realising our vision for the future



Realising our vision for the future

Help us build a coalition for change. We invite citizens, businesses, government and civic organisations to join us on this journey to remake the economy — to make it work for everyone.

By design, our goals are not set in stone. Rather, we want to define our objectives collectively, using an open, collaborative process that engages a range of stakeholders. In particular, we want to involve our citizens in this process. We want to build on the solidarity and social action we have seen through this crisis, learning from it and harnessing it for the economic transitions of the coming months and years.

We have big ambitions, and to reach them we will need to draw on the best thinking. We plan to bring key concepts pioneered at UCL's Institute of Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP), such as the role of an entrepreneurial public sector in shaping growth, to stretch our understanding of what is possible and give us the tools to realise this ambitions. Adapting this framework will provide Camden with a roadmap for an inclusive, dynamic and innovative economy. It will also provide new tools and sources of inspiration to other places.

Realising our ambitions

We realise that local authorities will need to make best use of their influence and local levers (such as in licensing, planning, local procurement, public protection and public real management) in pursuit of these goals and enable the safe return to vibrancy of our local businesses and high streets. In some cases, local authorities will need to seek new levers and financial mechanisms to fulfil these goals. These levers and mechanisms may include:

- Wealth funds that capture and distribute the benefits of growth to local areas
- Placing conditions on investment and support
- Investment in robust public capacity for a strong local state and robust voluntary sector, both of which support the social infrastructure required for growth
- Risk and reward sharing
- Labour market activation policies, including universal basic jobs guarantee
- Risk sharing in contracts that can unlock local innovation

The policy positions will reflect theoretical frameworks from the IIPP on market shaping versus market fixing; public value versus public goods; and orienting diverse stakeholders around a common mission. These policy options will be considered on a range of issues and adapted for the context of locally-driven approaches to inclusive economy.

Working in Partnership

The scale of the challenge we face is significant. In order to meet it, we need to work in close partnership with those who can bring expert insight into how we might chart an inclusive, just, fair, sustainable and participatory path forward.

Whilst the programme will be led by Camden Council and the IIPP, we want to develop a broader movement within Camden and beyond.

We want to work with the residents, businesses, community and faith groups, public and private institutions of Camden who share our vision for an inclusive economy and want to realise it with us.

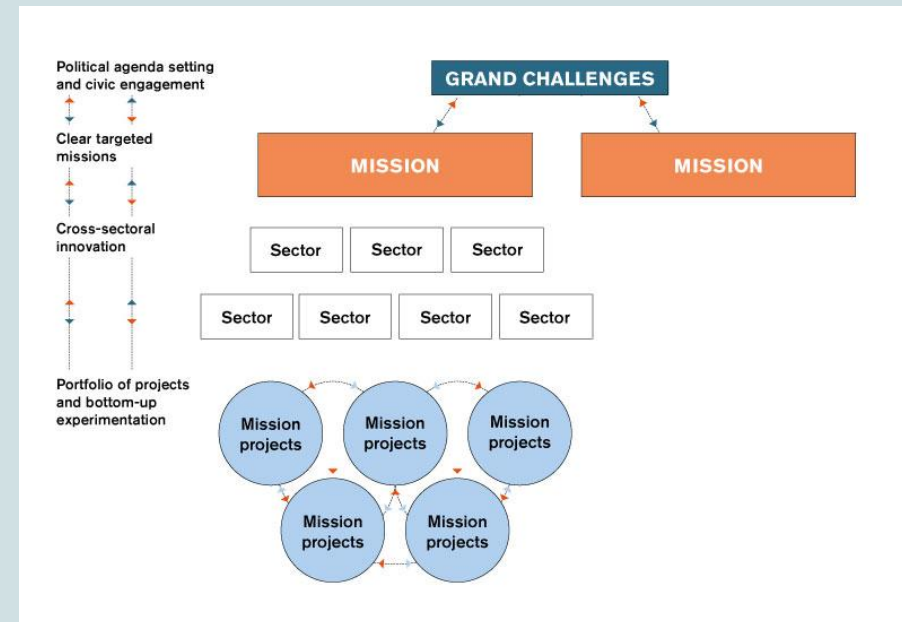
And we want to work with change makers across the sector, those in local authorities, think tanks and other institutions, who want to share thinking about how to create renewal for the places and communities we serve.

If you share our vision for the future, help us achieve it. Tell us about your interest on our website here, or watch this video from our co-chairs to hear the background to the Commission and find out more about how you can get involved.

Mission-Oriented Policy

The Camden Economic Renewal Commission will be developed in line with the framework of mission-oriented policy developed at the IIPP. The challenges targeted by the Commission are by their nature big, bold, difficult, and complex. To make these challenges achievable, they must be broken down into pragmatic steps. IIPP calls these missions; concrete targets within a challenge that act as frames and stimuli for innovation. Using missions to drive policy means focussing less on sectors and more on problems that matter to all.

By setting the direction for a solution, missions do not specify how to achieve success. The right answers are not known in advance. Rather, mission-oriented policies stimulate the development of a range of different solutions to meet grand challenges and reward those actors willing to take risks and experiment. Through well-defined missions that are focused on solving society's most important challenges, policymakers can determine the direction of growth by making strategic investments across many different sectors.



So how do you go from a challenge – like good jobs - to a mission? The mission must set clear objectives that can only be achieved by a portfolio of projects and supportive policy interventions, for example removing plastic waste from the oceans may require new design regulations, material standards, and removal technologies that require innovation projects from artificial intelligence and self-guidance to bio-plastic digestion.

We have set out five criteria for the development of missions – they should:

- Be bold, inspirational with wide societal relevance

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- Set a clear direction: targeted, measurable, and time-bound
 - Be ambitious but realistic
 - Encourage cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, and cross-actor innovation
 - Involve multiple, bottom-up solutions

This approach will form the framework for the policies and interventions to be developed by the Camden Economic Renewal Commission.

Where we want to get to

Creating an inclusive economy out of a public health and economic crisis is a hard task. The Renewal Commission will contribute to this endeavour by:

1. Creating a practical Inclusive Economy strategy for Camden, with a strong focus on outcomes, policy interventions to get there, and robust local governance
2. Convening a set of public value organisations in Camden and beyond that are testing out practical activity to drive inclusive growth and innovation in the local economy
3. Developing a clear policy position on how local government can drive forward inclusive economic renewal, which has support from Camden and other local authorities that share our vision

The Commission will launch this summer and conclude its work in the Spring of 2020. You can find out more about the emerging

programme of work at <https://camdenrenewal.com> or by contacting Camden's Inclusive Economy team.

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About Us

Camden Council is a leading London local authority responsible for an area that stretches from Covent Garden to Hampstead and Highgate. The **London Borough of Camden** is home to over 260,000 people, global businesses, and world-leading academic, public and creative institutions. Through St Pancras, we are the gateway to Europe.

Camden has a proud, rebellious spirit that throughout its history has seen our communities come together bring about real social change.

In Camden, our politics, our people and our resources are what make us different. We are bold. And we speak out. Together with our citizens, we developed Camden 2025, our shared vision for the future of the borough. We know that achieving this vision is beyond our reach as a single organisation so Camden 2025 is a call to action to work in new ways with our communities to help us find solutions to our biggest challenges.

We want to make Camden a better borough – a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and nobody gets left behind. Together we will create a place that works for everyone, and where everybody has a voice.

UCL's Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose exists to change how public value is imagined, practised and evaluated to tackle societal challenges.

The world is facing pressing challenges — social, technological, and economic. What is the future of the welfare state? How can digital platforms be governed in democratic and inclusive ways? What new forms of investment, regulation and collaboration can best tackle global warming? The answers to these questions require public and private organisations to collaborate in new ways and become more purpose-driven. In this context, governments require different tools and capabilities to co-create and co-shape markets, not just fix market failures.

IIPP's work is dedicated to this ambition. We bring revived notions of public value and public purpose to the centre of political economy and to concrete policy practice.

We are a department within University College London (UCL) — founded in 1826 to solve grand challenges — and part of The Bartlett, the world's number one faculty for the built environment. Our work equips leaders to co-design growth that is innovation-led, sustainable and inclusive.